Social Research Series

Paper No. 4

The Changing Nature of Part-time Work

by Grant Schellenberg

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Changing Nature of Part-time Work

Executive Summary

There is growing consensus among labour market analysts that the predominant trend in the economy has been towards an "up-skilling" rather than a "de-skilling" of jobs. While jobs with low-skill requirements are still prevalent, employment growth has been strongest in those sectors of the economy where the demand for highly skilled, knowledge-intensive workers is greatest. This report examines whether there is increasing scope for part-time employment on the high-skill, "good" side of the dichotomy between "good jobs" and "bad jobs." The evidence provides only modest support for this view.

An increasing share of part-time workers are in professional occupations, reflecting the overall growth in this occupational category. For example, among women aged 25 and older – who fill about half of all part-time jobs – the proportion who work as professionals has increased from about one-quarter to one-third since the mid-1980s. However, the majority of part-time workers are still employed in clerical, sales and service jobs – the three fields where part-time workers have traditionally been concentrated.

A review of changes in the distribution of wages among part-time workers also shows modest improvements. Between 1986 and 1993, the share of part-time workers earning less than $7.50 per hour declined by almost seven percentage points (from 47 to 40 per cent), and the share earning $15.00 per hour or more increased by five percentage points. However, the overall gains by part-time workers must not be overstated, since the largest share of these workers remained concentrated at the lower end of the wage distribution.

And despite modest improvements since the mid-1980s, the vast majority of part-time workers are still excluded from access to workplace benefits. In 1995, less than one-fifth of part-time employees were covered by occupational pension plans, medical and dental plans, or paid sick leave, compared to two-thirds of full-time employees. Among unionized part-time workers, access to workplace benefits improved in the late 1980s, but few gains have been made subsequently.

A review of other characteristics of part-time work, such as job security, work schedules, skill requirements, and the use of new technologies also indicates that generally, part-time workers fare poorly.

One way to measure job security is to assess the number of workers who report that their employment is "non-permanent." Using this measure, we find that there is much more job insecurity among part-time workers than among full-time workers. More than one-quarter of all part-time workers (28 per cent) reported that their job was non-permanent, compared to only one-tenth of full-time workers.

About half of these non-permanent part-time workers described their jobs as "casual." While some of these workers were young people still in school, many were older workers, and they may have considered their work to be casual because they hoped to find better-paying, full-time employment. Another one-third of the part-time workers who described their jobs as non-permanent did so because they were hired on contract for a fixed term only. And contract employment often has negative consequences for workers, including exclusion from workplace benefits and uncertainty about future employment.

The work schedules of part-time workers raise additional concerns about the quality of their jobs. While the vast majority of full-time workers (74 per cent) were employed on a regular daytime schedule, this was true

for a minority of part-time workers only (41 per cent). Most part-time employees must do shift work; more than one-third have irregular or on-call work schedules. As a result, their hours and earnings vary from week to week. This might not be difficult for young part-time workers still in school, but it does create insecurity for about one-quarter of the adult part-time workers (aged 25 and older) who also have irregular work hours and variable earnings. The vast majority of part-time employees who work irregular hours say they have little choice about doing so because it is a requirement of the job.

Evidence also suggests that part-time workers are often used for jobs that have lower skill requirements. As a result, they may be left out of the "up-skilling" process now underway. In the 1991 Census, a skill classification for jobs was developed based on the education, training and skills needed to enter positions and the duties undertaken. Within sales and service occupations, nearly half the jobs with the lowest skill requirements were filled by part-time workers, compared to less than one-fifth of the jobs that required the second highest skill level. The same pattern appeared in other occupational categories, although the differences were not as great. Part-time workers also tend to have lower levels of educational attainment than their full-time counterparts within the same occupations. And when they are asked, fewer part-time workers than full-time workers agree that their job requires a high level of skill.

There are also striking differences in the impact of new technologies on the jobs of part-time and full-time workers. More than half the full-time workers said that their jobs had been somewhat or greatly affected by the introduction of computers or automated technologies over the last five years; only about one-third of part-time workers said this was true of their jobs. Large differences are even evident within occupational categories. Among professionals, for example, two-thirds of full-time workers said their jobs had been affected by technology, but less than half (42 per cent) of the professional part-time workers made this claim. One important reason that many part-time workers may not be acquiring new technological skills is that they are over-represented in small firms. These firms tend to be found in sectors of the economy where technological change has been less rapid, such as in retail trades and personal services. Small firms may also be more likely than larger ones to try to remain competitive by cutting labour costs and other expenses, rather than by investing in new technologies.

Finally, a review of the employment preferences of Canadians reveals a significant gap between the type of employment available and the type of employment being sought. Fully half of all part-time workers indicated that they would prefer to work more hours for more pay. This represents a tremendous problem of underemployment among part-time workers, and it is prevalent among both sexes, and across all age groups, occupations and wage categories.

Between 1975 and 1994, the proportion of part-time workers who wanted a full-time job but could not find one rose from 11 to 35 per cent. This incidence of involuntary part-time work has increased in all sectors, including professional occupations. And it has risen significantly among mothers with children, indicating that for many women with children, part-time employment is more the result of a lack of employment options, rather than a voluntary choice about how best to balance their paid and unpaid work.

In summary, data up to 1995 indicate that advances in the quality of work due to technological changes have largely excluded part-time workers. This is particularly worrisome because the number of part-time workers has been growing in comparison to full-time workers. It appears that the polarization of the work force – with one group of workers receiving good wages, benefits and job security, and another group, including most part-time workers, receiving poor wages, no benefits and little security – is worsening.

The Growth of Part-time Employment

Introduction

Many people look back to the immediate post-war period as the "golden age" of economic prosperity. Soldiers returning from the war and new immigrants to Canada found jobs in a growing economy that was being fuelled by demands for Canadian resource exports to the international market. Many of these jobs were in new manufacturing industries that embraced the technologies of mass production, with the automobile industry being the quintessential example. Big industrial corporations benefitted from economies of scale by producing large quantities of standardized goods for a growing consumer market.

The typical worker in this *industrial* economy was a male, blue-collar worker employed in the production of goods. Job categories were strictly defined within a rigid occupational hierarchy. Unions began to win recognition as workers' bargaining agents, and new collective agreements were negotiated that offered shorter work weeks and higher wages. Overall, a new employment structure began to take shape with jobs in the goods-producing sector setting the standard.

During this period, an image of the "standard worker" emerged: a male breadwinner who was engaged in full-time work for a full-year, earning a "family wage." "Non-standard" workers – although certainly not labelled as such at the time – consisted primarily of self-employed individuals, particularly farmers. But with the decline of family farms and the growing dominance of large corporations, self-employment was on the wane. Increasingly, it seemed to be a remnant of the passing economic era.[1] Part-time employment constituted only a small fraction of the labour force. Early data from Statistics Canada suggest that only four per cent of the labour force held part-time jobs in 1953.[2] Virtually all workers in the goods-producing industries worked full-time.

An image of the "standard worker" emerged: a male breadwinner who was engaged in full-time work for a full-year, earning a "family wage."

Women did not really figure in this employment model at all. They were identified principally by their roles as caregivers in the private sphere, that is, as dependents of the "standard" workers. For women who sought employment – as many did after the war – their earnings were considered to be incidental to the family income, their labour market participation a matter of personal choice for the most part.[3]

Throughout the 1960s, it became clear that the labour market experiences of more and more workers were not typical of this standardardized industrial worker. Analysts struggling to make sense of these economic changes began to talk about the shift to a *postindustrial* economy. While defined in a number of ways, it included recognition of the shift in employment from goods-producing to service-producing industries. And the shift was considerable. In 1950, 60 per cent of

the Canadian labour force were employed in the production of goods, but by 1975, this had declined to 35 per cent, bringing with it a host of other changes. New types of occupations were created, many in knowledge-intensive fields, while jobs requiring unskilled manual labour waned.

The face of the workforce changed as well. While the productive – and largely unpaid – labour of women had always been critical to the economic survival of families,[4] their participation in the labour market increased significantly from the 1960s onward. Between 1966 and 1994, for example, the proportion of women participating in the paid labour force increased from 35 to 58 per cent.[5] The increase was especially marked among married women, including those with young children. Women entering the labour force did so almost exclusively in service-producing industries, and by 1975, over 80 per cent of all women with paid employment worked in these industries. As Clement and Myles noted, the working class soon had "two prototypes rather than one: the traditional blue-collar male and the postindustrial female service worker."[6]

For many, part-time work meant employment in marginalized jobs with low wages, few benefits and little opportunity for promotion or career development.

Unlike the standard 40-hour per week jobs held by the vast majority of men, many women who entered the labour force took jobs that provided fewer hours each week. In 1975, less than five per cent of the jobs in goods-producing industries were part-time; the comparable figure for service industries was 14 per cent, and for women employed in services, 29 per cent worked part-time. In essence, the rise of part-time employment was intrinsically connected to the expansion of service industries and the entry of women into the paid labour force.

The quality of these new jobs, particularly the part-time jobs, became a major concern with the shift in employment opportunities from goods-producing to service-producing industries. The concerns were fuelled, in part, by comparisons drawn between low-skilled and semi-skilled occupations in different sectors of the economy. In the goods-producing sectors – particularly in manufacturing – low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs had generally been unionized and had provided high wages, extensive benefits and employment security to the predominantly male workers who filled them. By contrast, the growing number of low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the service-producing industries tended to be non-unionized and generally offered low-wages, few benefits and little economy security. This raised concerns about the future of workers who had lower levels of skill and education. In the 1960s, such workers had been able to find "good" jobs in manufacturing and the natural resource sectors (provided they were men); by the 1980s, they seemed destined for the nearest fast food outlet or a long bout of unemployment.

The growth in part-time employment also fuelled concerns over job quality. While some analysts explained this growth by emphasizing the choices made by individuals, others underscored the importance of *employer demands*. From this perspective, the growth of part-time jobs and other types of non-standard employment was seen as the result of new hiring strategies by employers. In a climate of increased competition, employers sought to reduce their labour costs and increase their workforce flexibility by decreasing their core of full-time, permanent workers and hiring more workers on a part-time basis. Cost savings were achieved, the argument

stated, because part-time workers were usually paid lower hourly wages and received fewer benefits than their full-time counterparts. And because the schedules of part-time employees could be matched to fluctuations in business activities, marginal labour costs could be minimized. In short, part-time employment meant far more than simply working fewer hours each week. For many workers, it meant employment in marginalized jobs characterized by low wages, few benefits and little opportunity for promotion or career development.[7]

Such concerns have been raised in several documents that received considerable public attention. In 1983, the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work – the Wallace Commission – was released. After reviewing over 200 submissions from employers, employees, labour organizations, government departments and other sectors, the Commission concluded that there was "conclusive evidence to support the view that part-time workers in the Canadian labour force are treated unfairly compared to full-time workers."[8] A similar conclusion was reached by the former Economic Council of Canada in its 1990 statement, *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs*, in which they found that "nonstandard workers [including part-time] generally earn less than others in full-time, more permanent jobs in the same occupations and the same industries and that, in the majority of cases, they have fewer fringe benefits." The Economic Council concluded that "the increase in nonstandard jobs may be increasing the economic insecurity of growing numbers of workers."[9]

The following sections of this report review the impact of the changing labour market on part-time work and the characteristics of this type of employment. This is warranted to update studies done in the past and make available more recent information on part-time and full-time jobs. It is also worth revisiting this issue given the economic trends of the 1990s. Several are worth noting.

There is growing concensus among labour market analysts that the predominant trend in the labour market has been towards an "up-skilling" of jobs rather than a "de-skilling." While jobs with low-skill requirements are still prevalent, employment growth has been strongest in sectors of the economy where the demand for highly skilled, knowledge-intensive workers is greatest. This is evident in the high rate of employment growth within managerial and professional occupations, which has far surpassed the job growth rates in other occupations. Similarly, most of the new jobs that have been created require persons with post-secondary education, while the range of job opportunities available for persons who have completed only high school or less has rapidly diminished.

There is a sense of financial insecurity among families faced with job instability, high unemployment rates, and cut-backs in government programs.

The economy's demand for skilled workers raises the question: Is there also potential for creating part-time employment in the "good jobs" sectors of the economy? In this report, we examine whether the quality of part-time jobs available in the labour market is improving, thereby reducing concerns about the negative aspects of these jobs.[10]

The changing nature of the employer-employee relationship and its impact on part-time work is another important consideration. Throughout 1990s, the use of *contract* or *term* employment has been increasingly prevalent, with growing numbers of jobs based on short-term employment

relationships specified at the outset. Workers in these jobs have no assurance from their employer that the job will last longer than the term of the contract – often six months or less. This trend is particularly evident among part-time workers. Not only are they employed on a reduced schedule – even though many may want full-time hours – many part-time workers are employed for set periods of time only. As a result, workers in these jobs have little security or stability, and they are often excluded from such workplace benefits as occupational pensions, medical plans and dental coverage. This report assesses the extent to which short-term work contracts are eroding the position of part-time workers.

Changes in the financial security and employment preferences of Canadians in the 1990s are also central to any examination of part-time employment. There is an increased sense of financial insecurity among families – even among those in the middle of the income spectrum – as they are faced with job instability, high unemployment rates, and cut-backs in government programs. Recent public opinion polls by Angus Reid found the following:

- 29 per cent of Canadians expressed anxiety over the security of their job for the coming year;[11]
- 50 per cent said jobs and unemployment are the most pressing policy issues facing the nation;[12]
- 62 per cent predicted that the younger generation would be worse off financially than their own generation.[13]

Within the context of this sense of insecurity, employment decisions are made. Changes in employment preferences, particularly among women, have been evident over the last decade as increased numbers of individuals seek full-time rather than part-time jobs. The need to bolster the economic security of the family is undoubtedly an important dimension of this. It is clear, however, that the number of Canadians who want full-time jobs far surpasses the number of such jobs available. The result is a growing problem of *underemployment*, with more people having less paid work than they want, and need.

In the conclusion of this report, we draw together our findings to determine whether or not the status of part-time workers has improved significantly in the 1990s and what the future trends are likely to be, given the changing nature of the workplace.

Methodology

This analysis is based on data drawn from several Statistics Canada sources. In the first section, published data from *Labour Force Annual Averages* (based on Statistics Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey) are used to examine employment trends within occupations and industries. Between 1976 and 1994, Statistics Canada defined full-time workers as "all persons who usually worked at least 30 hours a week at all jobs, and those who considered themselves to be full-time workers even through their total hours were usually less than 30 per week." Part-time workers were identified as persons "usually working less than 30 hours a week at all jobs if they did not self-identify as full-time."[14] Allowance was made for persons who usually worked less

than 30 hours a week to count themselves as full-time in order to accommodate cases where specific employment policies or legislation limited the number of hours per week that a person could work (such as with airline pilots).

In 1995, Statistics Canada adopted new definitions of part-time and full-time employment in its Labour Force Survey. The subjective component of the old definition was dropped, and the 30-hour per week benchmark was applied to the main or sole job held by workers rather than to all jobs held during the week.[15] Because of these changes, estimates of part-time employment after 1995 are not strictly comparable to estimates for previous years. Consequently, trends in part-time employment are limited to the years between 1984 and 1994 and are based on the old definition. Trends in the labour force overall are presented up to 1996, the most recent year available, since comparability is not an issue.

In the second section of the paper, data from the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements are used to examine the characteristics of part-time and full-time employment. In this survey, part-time workers are identified as all individuals who work less than 30 hours a week at their main or sole job – a comparable definition to that used in the Labour Force Survey after 1995.

Part One:

Labour Market Trends and Part-time Employment

The up-skilling of the workforce

The type of employment generated by the service economy has been a source of considerable concern and debate over the years. Some writers have worried about the emergence of a service economy that is dominated by low-skilled, poorly paid jobs, such as those found in fast food franchises and video outlets. Others have been more optimistic, predicting the emergence of a labour market characterized by high-skilled, knowledge-intensive jobs. While many jobs still have low-skill requirements, there is growing consensus among labour market analysts that the evidence most clearly supports the latter view.

In its review of occupational changes in 19 countries, the OECD reported that throughout the 1980s, "the large and relatively high-skilled group of professional and technical workers increased its share of total employment in every country. Another fast-growing group, again highly skilled, though relatively small, was administrative and managerial workers."[16] Occupational projections for the coming years indicate a continuation of this trend, with the evidence pointing to "a continued across-the-board increase in the levels of skills and competences required for employment."[17]

Similar occupational trends are certainly evident in Canada. Between 1984 and 1996, total employment in managerial and administrative occupations grew by 62 per cent. In absolute terms, this represented an increase of almost 750,000 new workers.[18] Similarly, employment in professional occupations grew by 44 per cent – representing an increase of almost 800,000 new workers. Together, employment growth in these two fields accounted for over half (55 per cent) of all new employment generated between 1984 and 1996. The same pattern is also evident in the more recent period between 1989 and 1996. As shown in Table 1, rates of employment growth within other occupational categories have been far lower than those in the managerial and professional fields.

Table 1
Rates of Employment Growth within Occupations, Canada, Selected years

	Rates of Employment Growth	
	1984 to 1996	1989 to 1996
Managerial & administrative	62	17
Professional	44	18
Sales	32	12
Services	27	10
Clerical	4	- 11
Agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining	- 6	2
Processing, machining, fabricating	9	- 7
Construction	21	- 13
Transportation & material handling	25	6
Total	25	5

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

The category of professional occupations is broad and contains a fairly wide range of jobs. Looking more closely at this group, in Table 2 we see that employment growth since 1984 has been greatest within the artistic, literary and recreational fields (76 per cent), followed by the social sciences (69 per cent). Rates of growth have been somewhat lower in natural sciences – which includes engineers, architects, systems analysts and other professions – and in health care and education. Nonetheless, growth within these occupational groups has been far above the labour force average.

Table 2
Rates of Employment Growth within Professional Occupations, Canada, Selected years

	Rates of Employment Growth	
	1984 to 1996	1989 to 1996
Total Labour Force	25	5
Professional Occupations - All	44	18
Artistic, literary & recreation	76	31
Social sciences	69	33
Natural sciences, mathematics, engineering	40	12
Medicine & health care	38	14
Teaching	34	16
Religion	6	0

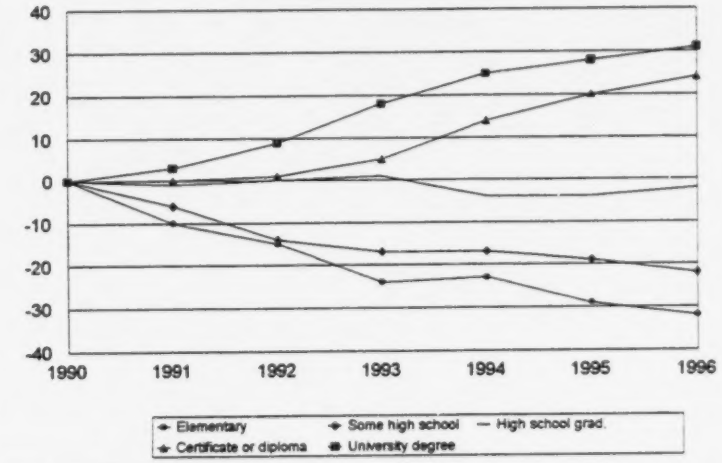
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

Educational factors also point to an increase in the skill levels required for employment. For example, Human Resources Development Canada has estimated that between 1986 and 2000, almost two-thirds of new jobs in Canada will require more than 12 years of education or training, and almost half will require more than 17 years.[19] Granted, caution must be exercised when equating education with skill levels, since people may have more education than is needed for the job they are in, and employers may use educational credentials as a way to screen new recruits. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that the need for educational qualifications has increased because job duties have changed.[20]

Recent employment estimates certainly testify to the growing importance of educational qualifications. As shown in Figure 1, the number of employed Canadians with a university degree increased by 31 per cent between 1990 and 1996, and the number with post-secondary certificates and diplomas increased by 24 per cent. By contrast, employment prospects have been dismal for people with less than a high school education. The number of employed Canadians with only elementary or some high school education has declined by 20 to 30 per cent since 1990, and unemployment rates have remained around 15 per cent.[21] The importance of education to labour market success is evident among both men and women, and in all age groups.

Figure 1

Percentage Growth/Decline in Employment, by Education, Canada, 1990 to 1996



Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's Labour Force Annual Averages, selected years.

More highly skilled workers are required

At least two factors account for the "up-skilling" trend in the labour force. The first is the widespread development and use of new technologies. Biomedical technology, new materials technology, and information technology have all proliferated in recent years. Of these, information technology has had the greatest impact on employment and business operations, primarily because of its wide range of applications – from industrial production to home entertainment – and its increasing affordability.[22]

There is mounting evidence that the new technologies have had a positive impact on job skill requirements. For example, in a longitudinal study of Canadian businesses, Gordon Betcherman and his colleagues documented the increased use of computer-based technologies. They reported that a growing number of firms are incorporating such technologies into their operations and using them in a wider range of applications.[23] The report stated that:

> The establishments reporting the most extensive use of computer-based technology had far more high-skilled and far less low-skilled employees than the other establishments. As computerization proceeds, then, firms must develop the capacity to meet the increased skill requirements.[24]

The Economic Council of Canada had reached a similar conclusion, reporting that "a number of factors, most prominently technological change, is leading to a reorganization of production in

both goods and services, and employment is increasingly concentrated in more highly skilled jobs."[25] Overall, there is consensus that the new technologies raise the skills required of workers in highly skilled jobs, while also increasing the number of such jobs. At the same time, new technologies tend to diminish the skills required by workers in jobs that are already characterized as semi-skilled or unskilled, and decrease the number of such jobs.[26]

A second factor underlying the growth in the number of high-skilled jobs has been the changing demands for goods and services. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, demands for health care, education, financial services and business services have continued to rise, creating employment opportunities for workers in these fields. As shown in Table 3, total employment in business services increased by 102 per cent between 1984 and 1996, and by 31 per cent between

Table 3
Rates of Employment Growth within Industry Sectors, Canada, Selected years

	Rates of Employment Growth	
	1984 to 1996	1989 to 1996
Business services	102	31
Health & social services	45	16
Accommodation, food, beverage, other services	44	17
Educational services	28	11
Construction	27	- 11
Finance, insurance & real estate	26	4
Distributive services*	24	3
Retail trades	21	2
Manufacturing	7	- 7
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & mining	- 4	- 1
Total	25	5

* Distributive services include transportation, communication, utilities and wholesale trades.
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

1989 and 1996, in response to growing demands for such things as computer support services, accounting and bookkeeping services, and achitectural, advertising, legal, engineering, and other services. Considerable employment growth has also been evident in health care, social services and education – three sectors which employ large numbers of professionals.

Up-skilling trend limited for part-time jobs

Overall, there is evidence that a general up-skilling of the labour force is underway in Canada. To the extent that part-time workers are part of this trend, they are likely to find increasing opportunities in the "good job" sectors of the economy where workers have access to higher wages, workplace benefits and employment security. This would reverse the trend of previous decades when part-time workers were clustered in low-paying, insecure jobs.[27] In this section, we look at the distribution of part-time employment across various sectors of the economy to assess whether part-time jobs have been part of the up-skilling trend.

Relative to full-time workers, part-time workers are still overrepresented in clerical, sales and service occupations – accounting for six of every 10 part-time workers – and they are underrepresented in managerial/professional occupations and in blue collar jobs (Table 4).

Table 4
Composition of Full-time and Part-time Employment, by Occupation, Canada, 1996

	Full-time	Part-time	Percentage-point difference
Managerial/Professional	35	25	- 10
Clerical	13	20	+ 7
Sales	9	15	+ 6
Services	11	26	+ 15
Blue collar	32	15	- 17
Total	100%	100%	

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages, 1996.*

Nevertheless, there have been changes within the part-time labour force that reflect broader trends in the labour market overall. Between 1984 and 1994, the number of part-time workers in managerial and professional occupations rose by 68 per cent, representing an increase of approximately 210,000 workers (Table 5).[28] This far surpassed the growth rate of part-time employment overall (at 35 per cent), and the specific growth rates of part-time jobs in sales, services and clerical occupations (ranging from 26 to 34 per cent). In some blue collar occupations, the growth rate of part-time jobs has been high, but the number of part-time workers in these occupations remains small; in these cases, the large percentage increases translate into relatively few additional workers. The growth of part-time jobs in the managerial and professional occupations has continued in recent years (1989 to 1994), with the number of part-time workers in these categories rising by 25 per cent, compared to an increase of only 15 per cent in the part-time workforce overall.

Table 5
Rates of Part-time Employment Growth within Occupations, Canada, Selected years

	Rates of Part-time Employment Growth	
	1984 to 1994	1989 to 1994
Managerial, administrative & professional	68	25
Sales	34	14
Services	26	13
Clerical	28	6
Agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining	- 9	15
Processing, machining, fabricating	36	19
Construction	68	62
Transportation & material handling	40	11
Total	35	15

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

As mentioned earlier, many different types of jobs are included within the broad category of managerial and professional occupations. More detailed occupational breakdowns are available up to 1993, and help provide a more nuanced view of part-time employment trends throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. As shown in Table 6, the number of part-time workers in managerial and administrative occupations grew by 129 per cent between 1984 and 1993, although the number of part-time workers in these fields remained small (86,000). Within professional occupations, part-time employment grew most in the social sciences (112 per cent) and in natural sciences, mathematics and engineering (92 per cent), but again, the absolute numbers of part-time workers in these occupations, particularly in natural sciences, remain small. Most of the part-time employment has been in the teaching and health care professions. Growth rates in these occupations have been high, relative to the overall rate, and have largely been the result of employment growth in the public sector.

Table 6
Rates of Part-time Employment Growth within Managerial and Professional Occupations, Canada, Selected years

	Rates of Part-time Employment Growth 1984 to 1993	Numbers of Part-time Workers, 1993
Total Part-time	28	2,142,000
Managerial & administrative	129	86,000
Professional Occupations - All	46	399,000
Social sciences	112	40,000
Natural sciences, math., engineering	92	16,000
Teaching	36	108,000
Medicine & health care	35	165,000
Artistic, literary & recreation	24	66,000
Religion	n/a	n/a

n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimates
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

As a result of these trends, there has been a noticeable shift in the occupational composition of part-time employment over the last decade. In 1984, slightly less than one in five part-time workers was employed in managerial and professional occupations, but by 1993, this had risen to slightly less than one in four. This shift is even more apparent if we isolate the changes that have occurred among young people and adult women – the two groups that make up the vast majority (85 per cent) of part-time workers in Canada.

Young workers (aged 15 to 24 years) account for slightly more than one-third of the part-time labour force. The vast majority of young part-time workers are still found in clerical, sales and service jobs (Table 7); relatively few (about one in 10) have gained access to professional and managerial positions, either as part-time or full-time workers. That is not surprising since these young workers have not yet accumulated the credentials and experience needed for such jobs.

It is among adult women (aged 25 years and older) that the largest occupational shift has occurred. Adult women account for about one-half of all part-time workers in Canada, with the largest share (31 per cent) employed in managerial and professional occupations. More

importantly, this share was five percentage points higher in 1993 than it had been in 1984. Using data from the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, it appears that women continued to move into managerial and professional occupations throughout the 1990s, although direct comparisons are not possible because of the different definitions of part-time used in that survey (see Methodology). Men aged 25 years and older make up about 15 per cent of the part-time labour force, with the largest share employed in blue collar occupations.

Table 7
Composition of Part-time Employment, by Occupation, Canada, Selected years

	1984	1989	1993	1995	Percentage-point change 1984 to 1993
All part-timers					
Mmgt. & professsional	19	21	23	23	+ 4
Clerical	22	23	21	19	- 1
Sales	16	16	15	14	- 1
Services	28	27	27	27	- 1
Blue collar	15	13	14	17	- 1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Youth (15-24 years)					
Mgmt. & professsional	9	10	11	11	+ 2
Clerical	18	19	19	17	+ 1
Sales	19	21	20	18	+ 1
Services	37	34	35	36	- 2
Blue collar	17	16	15	18	- 2
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Women (25 years +)					
Mgmt. & professsional	26	30	31	34	+ 5
Clerical	29	29	27	24	- 2
Sales	14	12	12	12	- 2
Services	22	21	22	21	–
Blue collar	9	8	8	10	- 1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years. Figures for 1995 are drawn from Statistics Canada's Survey of Work Arrangements microdata file.

The growing share of part-time employment in professional occupations is part of a general trend towards part-time employment in all occupations. Table 8 shows that between 1984 and 1993, the incidence of part-time employment in professional occupations increased from 15.2 to 17.0 per cent, mirroring the increase in part-time employment in the labour force overall, which rose from 15.3 to 17.3 per cent. With the advent of new technologies and changing demands for goods and services, new types of jobs are being created, thus altering the occupational profile of the labour force. This has been evident among both part-time and full-time workers. Although part-time workers are still largely concentrated in sectors of the economy that are characterized by poorer quality employment – particularly in sales, services and clerical positions – an increasing

number have found work in professional fields where wages, benefits, and skill requirements are generally more favourable.

Table 8
Incidence of Part-time Employment, by Occupation, Canada, Selected years

	1984	1989	1993	Percentage-point change 1984 to 1993
Managerial & administrative	3.2	4.2	5.1	+ 1.9
Professional Occupations - All	15.2	16.1	17.0	+ 1.8
Social sciences & related	10.5	12.5	14.5	+ 4.0
Natural sciences & related	2.1	2.8	3.3	+ 1.2
Teaching	16.7	17.3	18.0	+ 1.3
Medicine & health care	22.6	24.0	23.5	+ 0.9
Artistic, literary & recreation	23.1	21.9	25.9	+ 2.8
Religion	n/a	n/a	13.1	n/a
Clerical	19.9	20.8	23.6	+ 3.7
Sales	24.9	25.1	26.4	+ 1.5
Services	31.6	30.5	33.7	+ 2.1
Blue collar	7.1	6.5	8.7	+ 1.6
Total	15.3	15.1	17.3	+ 2.0

n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimates
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's *Labour Force Annual Averages*, selected years.

In the following sections of this report, we review the qualities of part-time employment – such as the skill requirements, the impact of new technologies, hourly wages, benefits, schedules, preferred hours of work, and job security – in order to determine whether the postindustrial economy is enabling more part-time workers to enjoy the advantages of flexible, high-skilled employment, or whether they are being excluded from good jobs in the new economy.

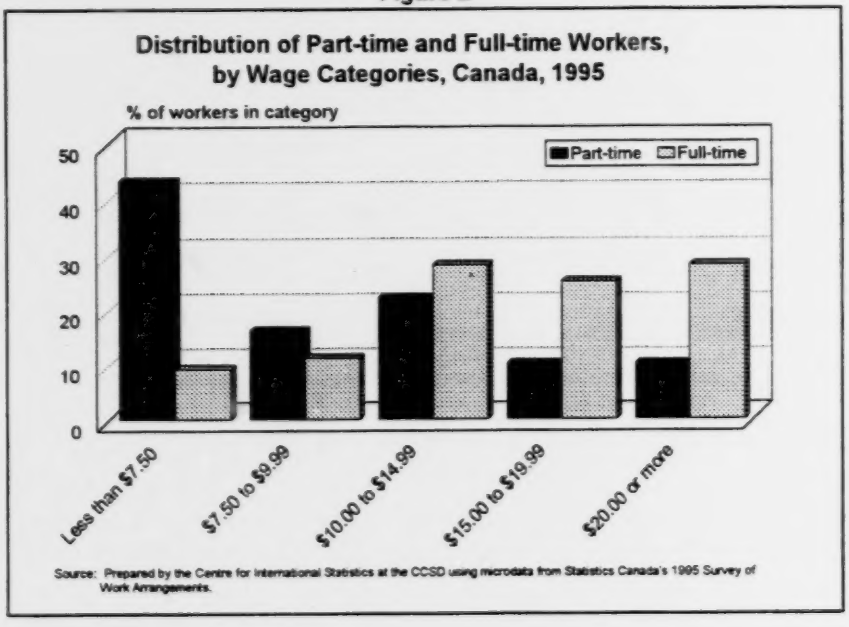
Part Two:
Are Part-time Jobs Becoming Good Jobs?

Hourly wages

Hourly wage rates are fundamental determinants of what constitutes a "good" job; on this score, part-time employment has fared very poorly. One of the most striking characteristics about part-time employment is the extent to which it is concentrated at the low end of the wage distribution. In 1995, nearly half (43 per cent) of all part-time workers earned less than $7.50 per hour, compared with less than one-tenth of full-time workers. Very few part-time workers are located at the high end of the wage distribution. For example, only 10 per cent of part-time workers earned $20 or more per hour in 1995, compared to 28 per cent of full-time workers.

Part-time employment as a source of low-wage labour in Canada becomes evident when we consider the data in slightly different terms. In 1995, part-time workers accounted for over half (55 per cent) of all workers earning less than $7.50 per hour; they made up about one-quarter of those earning $7.50 to $9.99 per hour, and less than one-tenth of those with hourly earnings of $15.00 or more.

Figure 2



This concentration of part-time jobs at the bottom of the wage distribution, in part, reflects the characteristics of workers in those jobs. As noted earlier, workers between the ages of 15 and 24 account for more than one-third (36 per cent) of all part-time workers and only one-tenth of all full-time workers. Younger workers tend to receive lower wages because they have less experience and seniority than older workers.

The predominance of women in part-time jobs may also be a factor in the low wage distribution. Many feminist scholars have argued that work done by women is more likely to be

undervalued by society than work done by men. In this context, the concentration of part-time jobs at the low end of the wage distribution may reflect the fact that "women's jobs have been systematically underpaid relative to those of men."[29]

The concentration of part-time workers at the bottom of the wage distribution also reflects the characteristics of the jobs themselves. Part-time workers are overrepresented in sectors of the economy where wages tend to be low such as hotels, bars, restaurants, retail stores, and service franchises. Moreover, in these sectors, rates of unionization are low and small firms are prevalent – two factors associated with lower hourly wages. And as noted earlier, well over half of part-time workers are employed in clerical, sales and service occupations where wages tend to be low for all workers.

But while a large share of part-time workers remain employed in low-wage sectors of the economy, a key question is whether part-time work has grown in the high-wage sectors in recent years. The answer will help determine whether postindustrialism has offered greater scope for part-time employment in the "good jobs" sector of the economy. Table 9 shows the distribution of employment across hourly wage categories. (All figures are expressed in constant 1995 dollars.) Between 1986 and 1993, the share of full-time workers in jobs paying less than $7.50 per hour declined from 16 to 12 per cent. The share of full-time workers in other lower wage categories also declined. By contrast, the share of full-time workers in jobs paying more than $20 per hour increased from about 22 to 27 per cent.

Table 9
Distribution of Full-time and Part-time Workers, by Hourly Wage Category, Canada, 1986, 1990 and 1993 (in 1995$)

Hourly wage	Full-time Workers			
	1986	1990	1993	Difference 1986 to 1993
Less than $7.50	16	14	12	- 4
$7.50 to $9.99	13	13	11	- 2
$10.00 to $14.99	28	30	27	- 1
$15.00 to $19.99	21	21	24	+ 3
$20.00 or more	22	22	27	+ 5
Total	100%	100%	100%	
Hourly wage	**Part-time Workers**			
	1986	1990	1993	Difference 1986 to 1993
Less than $7.50	47	42	40	- 7
$7.50 to $9.99	15	17	17	+ 2
$10.00 to $14.99	21	23	20	- 1
$15.00 to $19.99	8	8	11	+ 3
$20.00 or more	9	10	11	+ 2
Total	100%	100%	100%	

Note: Wages are for the first job held by paid employees during the year. All figures are in constant 1995 dollars.
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1986 and 1990 Labour Market Activity Survey and the 1993 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

A similar trend occurred among part-time workers. Over this period, the share of part-time workers in jobs paying less than $7.50 per hour declined by almost seven percentage points (from 46.6 to 39.9 per cent), while shares in the higher wage categories increased by two to three percentage points. Overall, while the largest share of part-time workers remained in low-paying jobs, a small segment were able to secure employment at higher rates of pay. This suggests that postindustrialism has had a positive, although limited, impact on the quality of part-time employment.

It is also worthwhile assessing whether the wage gap between full-time and part-time workers has widened, narrowed, or remained about the same in recent years. As noted, the hourly wages of part-time workers tend to fall well below those of their full-time counterparts. If this gap has narrowed and the hourly wages of part-time workers have moved closer to their full-time counterparts, a stronger case could be made that postindustrialism has improved the scope for high-quality, part-time employment. On the other hand, if the gap has widened and the wages of part-time workers have lagged further behind, it would indicate that the scope for "good quality" part-time employment has diminished. In fact, the evidence suggests that the gap between the hourly wages of part-time and full-time workers has remained largely unchanged (Table 10). In 1986, the median wage of part-time workers was 60 per cent of that earned by full-timers; in 1993, this ratio was almost unchanged at 58 per cent. The same pattern holds true when sex and age are taken into account. Similarly, within occupations there have been only modest changes in the hourly wages of part-timers relative to full-timers.

Table 10
Comparison of Median Hourly Wages Earned by Part-time Workers as a Percentage of Full-time Workers, by Gender and Age Group, Canada, Selected years

	1986	1990	1993	Change
All workers				
All	60%	60%	58%	- 2%
Men	44%	48%	45%	+ 1%
Women	76%	76%	72%	- 4%
Workers aged 25 +				
Men	70%	77%	69%	- 1%
Women	85%	87%	86%	+ 1%

Note: Wages are for the first job held by paid employees during the year.
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1986 and 1990 Labour Market Activity Survey and the 1993 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

Although the majority of part-time workers are still concentrated at the bottom of the wage distribution, this share has declined modestly in recent years and an increasing share are now found in higher wage categories. As with the occupational trends documented earlier, this shift has been part of a broader movement in the labour force overall.

It appears that postindustrialism has provided somewhat greater scope for part-time employment in the "good job" sectors of the economy. Good jobs are most likely to be available to part-time workers in professional occupations, for whom the average hourly wage was $16.80 in 1995 – more than twice the average hourly wage earned by part-time workers in sales and services (Appendix 1). Moreover, the average wages of part-time workers in some professional

occupations, particularly in education and health care, were comparable to their full-time counterparts. These occupations are found predominantly in the public sector, where rates of unionization are high. As a result, part-time and full-time workers are usually included under the same collective agreements, and wage parity is negotiated for both types of workers. In addition, some unionized part-time workers have the option of taking higher wages in lieu of benefits; consequently, they can earn more on an hourly basis than their full-time co-workers.

However, almost 60 per cent of part-time workers still earn less than $10.00 per hour, with most employed in clerical, sales and service occupations.

Benefits

Access to workplace benefits is another important component of job quality, and there are striking differences between full-time and part-time workers in this regard. Of all full-time employees in 1995, 60 to 70 per cent had access to occupational pension plans, medical and dental plans, and paid sick leave. By contrast, less than 20 per cent of part-time employees received such benefits (Table 11).

Within occupations, the differences between part-time and full-time workers were also dramatic. In clerical occupations, for example, about 60 to 70 per cent of full-time workers received pension, medical, dental and sick leave benefits, while only about 20 per cent of part-time workers had these benefits. In service occupations, about 45 to 50 per cent of full-time workers received benefits, compared to less than 10 per cent of part-time workers. Even within professional occupations there were large disparities. For example, 86 per cent of full-time workers in educational professions were part of occupational pension plans, but only 43 per cent of part-time workers. Considerable disparities were evident among health care and other professionals as well. Part of the reason for this may be that some unionized workers decided to opt out of benefit packages and take a higher hourly wage instead. It may also be due to the prevalence of short-term employment contracts among part-time workers in all occupations.

While the vast majority of part-time workers are still not included in occupational pension plans, there has been a modest improvement in their coverage since the mid-1980s. Between 1986 and 1993, the share of all workers with occupational pension coverage increased from 41 to 45 per cent (Table 12).[30] The proportion of part-time workers with pension coverage increased from 13 to 17 per cent. All of the increase occured before 1990, in part, because of legislative changes at that time. However, the vast majority of part-time workers still do not have pension coverage. One reason for this is that many part-time workers are employed in sectors of the economy where rates of pension coverage are low for *all* workers. Another reason is that in some provinces, small firms (which employ the largest share of part-time workers) are exempt from legislation that requires part-time workers to have access to non-wage benefits, including pensions.[31]

Table 11
Workplace Benefits Received by Full-time and Part-time Workers, by Selected Characteristics, Canada, 1995

	% with occupational pension plans		% with medical plans	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Total	59	19	69	18
Gender				
Men	60	8	70	9
Women	58	23	67	21
Age group				
15 to 24 years	26	4	39	5
25 to 44 years	61	29	71	27
45 to 69 years	68	28	75	26
Occupation				
Management/Administration	66	28	80	34
Professional - All	74	39	78	35
Health	73	52	75	48
Education	86	43	84	32
Other	66	11	76	15
Clerical	61	20	69	22
Sales	42	8	56	8
Services	44	9	50	8
Blue collar	53	10	65	10
	% with dental plans		% with paid sick leave	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Total	64	16	66	18
Gender				
Men	65	8	64	8
Women	62	20	70	22
Age group				
15 to 24 years	36	5	36	5
25 to 44 years	67	25	68	27
45 to 69 years	68	23	74	28
Occupation				
Management/Administration	75	32	83	37
Professional - All	72	31	82	35
Health	72	45	81	40
Education	71	27	89	42
Other	73	12	79	18
Clerical	66	22	72	22
Sales	53	7	56	7
Services	46	6	50	8
Blue collar	60	7	51	6

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Table 12
Per cent of Full-time and Part-time Employees with Employer Pension Coverage, Canada, 1986, 1990 and 1993

	1986	1990	1993	Difference 1986 to 1993
Full-time	48	51	52	+ 4
Part-time	13	17	17	+ 4
Total	41	44	45	+ 5

Note: Pension coverage refers to first job held by employee.
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1986 and 1990 Labour Market Activity Survey and the 1993 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

Unions have made some progress in securing benefits and protective entitlements for part-time workers. Table 13 presents data on unionized workers included in collective agreements with large firms (i.e., those covering 500 or more employees) and shows the proportion with collective agreements that have provisions for part-time workers. Considerable gains were made between 1985 and 1990. For example:

- The share of unionized workers under these collective agreements with provisions for prorating benefits for part-time workers increased from six to 19 per cent.
- The share with provisions for part-time hours of work increased from 28 to 40 per cent.
- The share with provisions for severance pay for part-time workers increased from 16 to 23 per cent.

Between 1990 and 1996, however, part-time workers made few additional gains. Indeed, the share of all unionized workers with such provisions increased by only a few percentage points, if at all. This was true in all sectors of the economy, even in those where part-time employment was prevalent and rates of unionization were high. For example, in health, education, social services and public administration, the share of workers with collective agreements containing provisions for part-time workers increased markedly between 1985 and 1990, but remained largely unchanged throughout the 1990s.

Improvements in benefits coverage for unionized part-time workers in the 1990s may have come to a halt because the unions found their bargaining power diminished due to the recession at the start of the decade and the onging processes of downsizing and restructuring. Unions were kept busy trying to protect the jobs of their members and stave off wage cuts, leaving little time to negotiate the extension of protections and entitlements for part-time workers.

Overall, the vast majority of part-time workers do not have access to workplace benefits and there has been little improvement in recent years. This absence of benefits illustrates the limited extent to which the quality of part-time employment has improved with the emergence of the postindustrial economy. While changes in the occupational profile and wage distribution of part-time employment provide some cause for optimism, changes in benefit coverage certainly does not.

Table 13
Unionized Workers covered by Collective Agreements with 500 or more Employees: Per cent whose Collective Agreement has provisions for Part-time Workers, Canada, 1985, 1990 and 1996

				% point change between	
Provisions pertaining to:	1985	1990	1996	1985 to 1990	1990 to 1995
General reference to prorated benefits	6	19	19	+ 13	0
Pensions	9	6	11	- 3	+ 5
Hours of work	26	36	39	+ 10	+ 3
Holidays	28	40	41	+ 12	+ 1
Sick leave	24	39	43	+ 15	+ 4
Health and welfare	26	34	36	+ 8	+ 2
Seniority	33	37	38	+ 4	+ 1
Severance pay	16	23	25	+ 7	+ 2
Ratio of part-time to full-time workers	2	3	2	+ 1	- 1
No provisions pertaining to part-time workers	44	33	30	- 11	- 3

Source: Labour Canada, Workplace Information Directorate, *Collective Agreements in Canada with 500 or More Employees.*

Up to this point, changes in the occupational profile, wage distribution, and benefit coverage of part-time employment have been examined to determine whether postindustrialism offers increasing scope for good quality part-time employment. At best, the results are mixed. A growing share of part-time work is found in professional fields. Given that wages and skill requirements tend to be high in such fields, this suggests cause for optimism. Nonetheless, the majority of part-time employment is still found in clerical, sales and service jobs where wages and skill levels tend to be lower.

A similar story is evident in terms of wages. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, the distribution of wages for part-time workers shifted upwards, but the majority of part-time workers still earn relatively low wages.

Finally, access to workplace benefits for part-time workers has not improved much in recent years. The vast majority are still excluded from benefits such as pension plans and medical and dental plans.

Overall, postindustrialism appears to have had little positive effect on the quality of part-time employment. In the following sections, this finding is reinforced when we examine other aspects of job quality, including job security, regularity of pay and skill requirements.[32]

Job security

Job security has emerged as an central issue in the 1990s. Many workers – both full-time and part-time – have concerns about the future of their employment. However, far more part-time than full-time workers view their jobs as non-permanent (Table 14). This is the case for both men and women, across all age groups, and in all occupational categories. Among professionals, for example, one-third of part-time workers in 1995 were employed in non-permanent jobs compared to one-tenth of full-time workers. Non-permanent employment was especially prevalent among part-time workers in the field of education (54 per cent).

Table 14
Non-permanent Employment, by Gender, Age Group, Occupation, and Full-time/Part-time Status, Canada, 1995

	% of workers whose job is not permanent		
	Full-time	Part-time	Difference
Total	8	28	+ 20
Gender			
Men	8	35	+ 27
Women	8	25	+ 17
Age group			+ 17
15 to 24 years	15	32	+ 18
25 to 44 years	8	26	+ 18
45 to 69 years	5	23	
Occupation			
Management/Administration	3	18	+ 15
Professional - All	10	34	+ 24
Health	8	16	+ 8
Education	12	54	+ 42
Other	11	40	+ 29
Clerical	7	20	+ 13
Sales	5	26	+ 21
Services	7	27	+ 20
Blue collar	10	38	+ 28

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

There are two main reasons why so many part-time jobs are considered to be non-permanent. First, it reflects the intentions of many part-time job holders. When asked why their job was not permanent, 54 per cent of part-time workers said their job was a "casual" one, most likely indicating that they did not expect to remain in the job for an extended period of time; instead, they hoped to find alternative employment in the future. As shown in Table 15, young workers were most likely to describe their part-time job as casual. This is not surprising since younger workers are more likely than older workers to change jobs as they go through school and establish

careers. Yet even among part-time workers in older age groups, nearly half of those in non-permanent positions described their jobs as casual.

Part-time workers in sales and services were the most likely to say that their jobs were casual. This is not surprising in these occupations, since wages tend to be low and staff turnover is high. However, a surprisingly large proportion of part-time workers in the health professions (75 per cent) also described their jobs as casual.

Many part-time workers may view their jobs as non-permanent, casual positions because of the mismatch between the types of jobs available and those being sought. As we will see later in this report, more Canadians are taking part-time jobs, not because they want them, but because they cannot find full-time positions. Consequently, a growing number of workers may view their part-time employment as a temporary measure until they can find full-time work. In such cases, the casual nature of the jobs reflects the workers' underemployment.

The second reason so many part-time jobs are non-permanent is because they involve term or contract arrangements. Contract or term positions have a predetermined end; they are usually for a specified period of time (such as a six-month contract) or the completion of a specific task (such as a construction project). Employers may hire workers on contract to replace permanent staff who are absent because of annual vacations, maternity leave, or sick leave. Employers may also use contract employees to meet fluctuations in business demands. As shown in Table 15, 37 per cent of all non-permanent, part-time workers were employed in contract positions, excluding seasonal jobs. This was most common among women and older individuals. In professional occupations, half of the non-permanent, part-time workers were on contract; among teachers, it was commonplace. Contract employment was also widespread among part-time workers in clerical jobs.

Contract employment has a number of potentially negative consequences for workers. For example, to be eligible for workplace benefits such as pension or dental plans, even within unionized establishments, employees are often required to have at least six months of continuous employment with the firm. However, evidence indicates that the vast majority of contract positions last less than six months, so workers do not quality for benefits.[33] Contract workers also face greater employment insecurity since their jobs may not be renewed beyond the specified period. In this respect, the growing use of contract or term employment for part-time workers indicates a worsening of economic security for this group of workers.

Table 15
Part-time Workers in Non-permanent Jobs, by Reason Job is Not Permanent and by Occupation, Canada, 1995

	% of part-timers in non-permanent jobs			
	Non-seasonal contract or term job	Casual job	Seasonal, temporary help agency or other	Total
Total	37	54	9	100%
Gender				
Men	30	57	13	100%
Women	41	53	6	100%
Age group				
15 to 24 years	29	63	8	100%
25 to 44 years	41	49	10	100%
45 to 69 years	49	43	8	100%
Occupation				
Professional - All	50	43	7	100%
Health	21	75	4	100%
Education	68	32	na	100%
Other	34	44	22	100%
Clerical	50	45	5	100%
Sales	26	71	3	100%
Services	21	68	11	100%
Blue collar	32	50	18	100%

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Regularity of pay

Part-time workers are far more likely than full-time workers to be employed on a variable work schedule, which affects the regularity of their pay. Workers employed on a regular schedule can count on receiving a paycheque of a certain size at set times and make financial plans accordingly. Those who work irregular schedules face far greater economic uncertainty. As shown in Table 16, 74 per cent of all full-time workers in 1995 had regular daytime hours, but this was true of only 41 per cent of all part-time workers.

Part-time workers are far more likely than full-time workers to work nights and evenings, or rotating and split shifts. Over one-third of all part-time workers (35 per cent) in 1995 were employed on an irregular or on-call schedule. This means that their hours, and consequently their earnings, varied from week to week. Irregular schedules were most common among younger workers, with almost half (45 per cent) of part-time workers between the ages of 15 and 24 working irregular hours. A significant percentage of part-time workers in the older age groups also worked irregular hours. Within occupations, irregular schedules were most prevalent among part-time workers in sales (49 per cent), but they were common in other occupations as well.

Table 16
Work Schedules of Full-time and Part-time Employees, by Occupation, Canada, 1995

	Regular Day Shift		Other Shifts*		On-call or Irregular Schedules	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Total	74	41	16	24	10	35
Age group						
15 to 24 years	65	25	20	30	15	45
25 to 44 years	74	52	18	21	8	27
45 to 69 years	78	51	14	18	8	31
Occupation						
Management/Administration	89	67	5	n/a	6	25q
Professional - All	77	49	14	23	9	28
Health	49	40	38	35	13	25
Education	91	71	n/a	n/a	8q	20q
Other	85	35	8	22q	7	43
Clerical	85	49	9	19	6	32
Sales	71	28	11	23	18	49
Services	48	31	37	34	15	36
Blue collar	69	41	24	20	8	39

* Other shifts include regular evening shifts, regular night shifts, split shifts, and rotating shifts.
q = estimate less reliable due to small sample size
n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimate
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Nearly half of the part-time employees who work irregular schedules prefer to do so. When asked why they worked an irregular or on-call schedule, 34 per cent of part-time workers said that it allowed them time for school; 12 per cent mentioned other reasons, such as the need to provide care for children or family members (Table 17). For these workers, an irregular job schedule provided the opportunity to balance their paid employment with other activities. This was particularly so among young workers.

Yet most part-time workers (54 per cent) had little choice but to work irregular or on-call schedules because it was a requirement of the job. This was the case for the vast majority of part-time workers aged 25 and older.

Employers can use irregular schedules to reduce their labour costs. They may hire workers on a part-time basis so that staffing levels can be increased during periods of peak business activity and reduced during business downturns. Additional savings may also be realized if their employees have not worked a specified number of hours prior to a statutory holiday because according to federal and provincial labour codes, they become ineligible for holiday pay. In addition to saving money, employers may use part-time workers on an irregular basis to replace staff who are temporarily absent from their jobs. The use of substitute teachers is one example.

Table 17
Part-time Workers with Irregular or On-call Schedules, by Main Reason for Irregular Schedule, Canada, 1995

	Requirement of job / No choice	Allow time for school	Other reasons*	Total
Total	54	34	12	100%
Age group				
15 to 24 years	35	59	6	100%
25 to 44 years	70	8	22	100%
45 to 69 years	81	n/a	16	100%
Occupation				
Professional	63	16q	21	100%
Clerical	55	29	16	100%
Sales	52	38	10	100%
Services	50	44	6	100%
Blue collar	48	42q	10	100%

* Other reasons include caring for children or other family members, to earn more money, and unstated reasons.
q = estimate less reliable due to small sample size
n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimate
Source: Prepared by Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

In summary, nearly half of the part-time workers with irregular hours indicated that they had chosen their work schedules in order to accommodate other activities in their lives; the rest indicated that they worked irregular hours because that was all that was available to them. As a result, part-time workers' economic security was reduced because their pay cheques varied with the hours worked.

Skills required

The increased demand for skilled labour has been one of the major changes in the labour market over the past decade. But what impact has this had on part-time and full-time workers? Some labour market analysts have argued that even within occupational categories, part-time workers often undertake different tasks and assume different responsibilities than their full-time counterparts. According to these analysts, the persistent wage differential between full-time and part-time workers is due, in part, to the differing tasks and responsibilities of full-time and part-time workers.

If tasks and responsibilities vary within occupations, the impact of changes in these areas may vary as well. For example, if the more complex tasks and higher skill requirements primarily go to workers employed full-time, the part-time workers will continue to be relegated to tasks that have lower skill requirements and lower rates of pay. That is, they will be sidelined in the movement towards a more highly skilled and well-paid workforce.

One way of assessing the skills required for part-time jobs compared to those of full-time jobs is to consider the levels of education achieved by individuals in both types of employment.[34] Within all occupational categories, part-time workers in 1995 had fewer educational credentials than their full-time counterparts. For example, within professional jobs in the natural and social sciences, 46 per cent of full-time workers had a university degree compared to only 27 per cent of part-time workers (Table 18). Within education, health care and other professional occupations, the same pattern was evident.

Table 18
Educational Qualifications of Full-time and Part-time Workers in Professional Occupations, Canada, 1995

	No post-secondary credentials	Certificate or diploma	University degree	Total
Professional Occupations - All				
Full-time	17	36	47	100%
Part-time	24	45	31	100%
Natural & Social sciences				
Full-time	17	36	46	100%
Part-time	41	32	27	100%
Education				
Full-time	5	19	76	100%
Part-time	17	23	60	100%
Health care				
Full-time	19	57	24	100%
Part-time	12	74	15	100%
Artistic, literary, recreation				
Full-time	46	29	25	100%
Part-time	61	28	11	100%

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Similarly, part-time workers in clerical, sales and service occupations were far less likely than their full-time counterparts to have completed post-secondary credentials (a certificate, diploma or degree). In clerical occupations, for example, 42 per cent of full-time workers in 1995 had post-secondary credentials compared to only 29 per cent of part-time workers (Table 19). This pattern remained even when other factors, such as age and student enrolment, were taken into account.

Table 19
Educational Qualifications of Full-time and Part-time Workers, by Selected Occupations, Canada, 1995

	No post-secondary credentials	With post-secondary credentials	Total
Clerical			
Full-time	58	42	100%
Part-time	71	29	100%
Sales			
Full-time	57	43	100%
Part-time	76	24	100%
Services			
Full-time	68	32	100%
Part-time	80	20	100%

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Differences between part-time and full-time workers were also evident when other measures of skill were considered. In the 1991 Census, the skill requirements of various jobs were measured; the evidence indicated that part-time workers were more likely to fill jobs with lower skill requirements than jobs with higher skill requirements.[35] For example, within sales and service occupations, almost half (46 per cent) of the jobs with the lowest level of skill requirements were staffed by part-time workers, compared to only one-fifth (18 per cent) of jobs requiring the second highest level of skill requirements (Table 20). The same pattern was evident within other occupational categories, although the differences were not as great.

Table 20
Incidence of Part-time Employment by Occupational Category and Skill Level, Canada, 1990

	Incidence of Part-time Employment		
	All	Women	Men
Sales & Service occupations - Skill level III	18	25	13
- Skill level II	38	45	21
- Skill level I	46	52	39
Administrative & senior clerical - Skill level III	18	20	7
Clerical - Skill level II	21	24	16
Skilled crafts & trades - Skill level III	7	20	6
Semi-skilled manual - Skill level II	13	21	10
Other manual - Skill level I	16	20	15
Senior managers - Skill level IV	5	14	3
Middle managers & others - Skill level IV	6	10	4
Supervisors - Skill level III	12	16	7
Foremen/Forewomen - Skill level III	9	19	7
Professionals - Skill level IV	17	26	8
Semi-professionals & technicians - Skill level III	19	29	10

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from the 1991 Census Public Use Sample Tape.

Workers themselves identify differences in the skills required for full-time and part-time jobs. In the 1994 General Social Survey, workers were asked if their job required a high level of skill. Responses ranged from one (indicating the respondent strongly disagreed with the statement), to four (indicating the respondent strongly agreed with the statement). As shown in Table 21, part-time workers in all occupational categories had lower scores than full-time workers, indicating that the part-time workers were less likely to agree that their jobs required a high skill level. Differences between full-time and part-time workers were smallest in the professional occupations and largest in sales and services, following the same pattern as was evident in the data from the 1991 Census.

Table 21
Workers' Perceptions of the Skill Requirements of their Jobs, by Full-time and Part-time Status, and by Gender, Canada, 1994

Job requires a high level of skill	All Workers			Women*		
	Full-time	Part-time	Difference	Full-time	Part-time	Difference
Professional	3.71	3.56	- 0.15	3.66	3.53	- 0.13
Clerical	3.00	2.58	- 0.42	3.02	2.60	- 0.42
Sales	3.28	2.42	- 0.86	3.16	2.36	- 0.80
Services	2.93	2.32	- 0.61	2.90	2.35	- 0.55

Note: Respondents were asked if their job required a high level of skill. Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree), to 4 (strongly agree). A higher score indicated a more positive result, that is, the worker felt that higher skills were required to do the job. All differences between the responses of full-time and part-time workers were significant to 0.01 level of confidence or better, except for women in professional occupations which was significant to 0.05 level of confidence.

* The sample size was too small to provide reliable estimates within occupations for men who were employed part-time.

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1994 General Social Survey.

Overall, there appear to be significant differences in the education levels and skills required for full-time and part-time jobs, and there is considerable debate among labour market researchers over the reasons for these differences. One interpretation is that employment contracts – in this case, part-time work schedules – are organized around the skill content of the jobs. Jobs offered on a part-time basis are those where skill requirements along various dimensions are low. This could include jobs requiring few cognitive skills (such as analytical reasoning), interpersonal skills (such as leadership or supervisory capabilities), or physical skills (such as dexterity or eye-hand coordination), as well as jobs that require relatively little training or education.

In short, these analysts believe that low-skill designations accurately reflect the content of part-time jobs. Employers need not worry about staff turnover in these positions because the costs of recruiting and training new workers are minimal, and in periods of high unemployment, there is a large labour pool from which to draw new recruits. Moreover, employers do not need to offer high wages or full-time hours to retain workers in these jobs since those who leave can be replaced quite easily. By filling such jobs on a part-time basis, employers are able to minimize their labour costs and increase the flexibility of their workforce. By contrast, jobs that are characterized as having higher skill requirements tend to be offered on a full-time basis in order to attract and retain more valuable employees.

Other analysts believe that the nature of employment contracts determines how skills are defined, rather than vice versa. Skills are defined through a social process by different actors with varying interests and assumptions (such as employers, unions, men, women, and so on). These analysts have argued that definitions of skill have "more to do with men's attempts, through trade unions, to retain some control over the labour process and keep skill designations for their own work by excluding women from better-paying jobs, than with actual technical competencies which are possessed by men and not by women."[36] Others have argued that "employers will attempt to link part-time work and non-recognition of skill, unless unions succeed in preventing them from do so."[37] In essence, the definitions of skill have as much to do with ideology and social relations as they do with technical competencies. From this point of view, part-time jobs are deemed to require less skill *because* they are filled by part-time workers – frequently women – and not because the jobs require fewer competencies than jobs held by full-time workers.

Perhaps the most pertinent arguments in this debate are the workers' own assessments of the skills required to do their jobs. Part-time workers themselves perceive their jobs as having lower skill requirements. This lends credence to the first interpretation – that there are actual differences in skill content between full-time and part-time jobs. It is most evident in sales and service occupations where differences in the measures of skills are most dramatic, whether workers' self-assessments or Census findings are used. In these fields, employers may indeed base their hiring decisions on the skills required for the jobs, choosing part-time workers for less skilled positions in order to minimize staff costs and increase workforce flexibility. However, in other sectors of the labour market, particularly in professional occupations, the evidence is unclear on the extent to which skill differences between part-time and full-time workers occur, and whether such differences are due to actual differences in job content or to the undervalued nature of the work performed.

Despite the obvious differences between these two interpretations, they have a similiar implication: part-time workers are far less likely than full-time workers to benefit from the increased demand for skilled labour. If part-time jobs really do require relatively low levels of skills, they will be left out of the process of up-skilling, and they will continue to be characterized by low wages, few benefits and little economic security. Likewise, if definitions of skills truly are shaped by vested interests and assumptions, and part-time employment continues to be undervalued – regardless of the job content – then workers in these part-time jobs, most of whom are women, will remain marginalized.

New technologies

The impact of new technologies provides another dimension in discussions about the changing skill content of the labour force. Although there has been some debate about the consequences of new technologies for workers, there is consensus that the introduction of new technologies tends to increase the overall skill requirements in the labour force. However, the new technologies appear to have very different effects on workers in different types of jobs. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted, "Industry-level studies...show that new technologies both reduce the skill content and the share of low-skill jobs

while increasing the skill content and share of high-skill jobs."[38] This means that new technologies are likely to erode the labour market and financial security for workers in low-wage, low-skill sectors of the economy while enhancing the position of workers in high-skill, high-wage sectors. It is therefore important to consider the impact that these new technologies are having on full- and part-time workers.

Results from the 1994 General Social Survey suggest that there are striking differences. For example, 59 per cent of women working full-time and only 36 per cent of those working part-time said that their jobs had been greatly or somewhat affected by the introduction of computers or automated technology over the previous five years (Table 22). Large differences were also evident within occupational categories. Among professionals, for example, 66 per cent of full-time workers and only 42 per cent of part-time workers said that their jobs had been affected by technology.

Table 22
Impact of Computers, by Full-time and Part-time Status, and by Occupation, Canada, 1994

	Extent to which job affected by introduction of computers		
	Greatly / Somewhat	Hardly / Not at all	Total
All			
Full-time	56	44	100%
Part-time	36	64	100%
Gender			
Men			
Full-time	54	46	100%
Part-time	35	65	100%
Women			
Full-time	59	41	100%
Part-time	36	64	100%
Occupation			
Professional			
Full-time	66	34	100%
Part-time	42	58	100%
Clerical			
Full-time	73	27	100%
Part-time	51	49	100%
Sales			
Full-time	60	40	100%
Part-time	45	55	100%
Services			
Full-time	28	72	100%
Part-time	17	83	100%

Note: Part-time workers were defined as those employed for less than 30 hours a week in their sole or main job.
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1994 General Social Survey.

One possible explanation for this difference is that part-time workers tend to be employed in firms where new technologies are not being introduced. As shown in the top of Table 23, part-time workers are overrepresented in small firms – particularly those with less than 20 workers –

and they are underrepresented in larger firms, in comparison to their full-time counterparts. Well over half of all part-time workers in 1994 were employed in firms with less than 100 employees.

New technologies have had the least impact on employment in smaller firms, at least in part because these businesses tend to be found in sectors of the economy where technological change has been less rapid, such as in retail trades and personal services. As shown in the bottom of Table 23, both full-time and part-time workers in larger firms were far more likely to indicate that their jobs had been affected by computers or automated technologies than workers in smaller firms.

Because some of the new technologies are expensive, smaller firms may be more likely than larger businesses to try to remain competitive by cutting their labour costs and other expenses rather than investing in new equipment. The frequent use of part-time workers in small firms is consistent with this interpretation.

Table 23
Distribution of Employment and Impact of New Technology on Jobs, by Size of Firm, Canada, 1994

Number of persons employed by firm	Per cent of Workers	
	Full-time Workers	Part-time Workers
Less than 20	31	44
20 to 99	15	14
100 to 499	15	11
500 to 999	7	5
1,000 or more	32	27
Total	100%	100%
	% of workers whose jobs were somewhat or greatly affected by new technology in previous five years	
	Full-time Workers	Part-time Workers
Less than 20	41	26
20 to 99	52	35
100 to 499	56	35
500 to 999	60	n/a
1,000 or more	73	53

n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimate

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1994 General Social Survey.

Even within very large firms (i.e., those employing 1,000 or more workers), far fewer part-time workers than full-time workers indicated that their jobs had been affected by technology. The marginalized position of part-time workers within large firms may be one reason why they were left out of technology-related changes in the workplace.

The findings in the General Social Survey also indicated that full-time workers were somewhat more likely than part-time workers to think that technology had increased the skill levels of their jobs (Table 24), although very few workers, either full-time or part-time, said that the skill levels had decreased. The same pattern was evident when workers were asked about their interest in the job. Relatively few workers, either full- or part-time, said that their job had become

less interesting because of the introduction of new technologies. However, part-time workers were less likely to say that their work had become more interesting, and more likely to say that it had remained the same. In short, while new technologies did not diminish part-time workers' interest in their jobs, the technologies did not have as positive an impact on part-time jobs as on full-time jobs.

Finally, both full-time and part-time workers held similar views about the impact of technology on their job security. About 20 per cent in each group said that their job security had been eroded by the introduction of new technologies, while the majority (about two-thirds) said that their job security had not changed. As Graham Lowe states, "few Canadians attribute past or expected job loss to technological change." Given this, he suggests that "predictions by some critics of massive job losses may be somewhat overstated."[39]

Table 24
Impact of Technology on Employment, by Full-time and Part-time Status, Canada, 1994

	Impact on level of skill		Impact on level of interest in job		Impact on level of job security	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Decreased	2	2	4	4	19	19
Stayed the same	25	37	32	44	67	69
Increased	73	61	64	52	14	12
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1994 General Social Survey.

Overall, both full-time and part-time workers were positive about the implications of technological change on their jobs. Most said that the new technologies did not have a negative impact on either the skills required to do their jobs or on their interest levels, and that these had actually been enhanced by the introduction of technologies. And while a significant minority of workers indicated that their job security had been eroded by technology, most said that there had been little change in this regard. Generally, perceptions about technological impacts were similar for full-time and part-time workers. Nonetheless, while part-time workers were no more likely than full-time workers to say that technology had had a negative impact on their jobs, they were somewhat *less* likely to say that it had had a positive impact. When comparisons were made within occupational categories, differences between part-time and full-time workers were again modest.

The conclusion we can draw from this analysis is that to date, part-time workers have been less involved than full-time workers in the technological revolution. As a result, this inhibits the ability of many part-time workers to increase their skill levels, and therefore to move into more interesting jobs and ones that are better paid.

Hours of work

Up to this point in the analysis, the characteristics of part-time jobs have been the central focus. Little attention has been paid to the characteristics of the workers in those jobs, particularly their employment preferences. Yet employment preferences are an important consideration since the extent to which individuals view jobs as "good" or "bad" is shaped, in part, by their expectations and aspirations. In this respect, there is a growing mismatch between the types of jobs available in Canada and the types of jobs being sought.

In the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, respondents were asked whether they were satisified with the number of hours they worked, would prefer to work more hours or would prefer to work fewer hours. The largest share of respondents (66 per cent) reported that they were satisfied with their hours of work (Table 25). A few (6 per cent) said that they would prefer to work fewer hours for less pay, while a significant minority (28 per cent) preferred to work more hours for more pay. (People who work fewer hours than they would like are considered to be underemployed.)

There were significant differences in the preferences of part-time and full-time workers regarding their work hours. Only one in five full-time workers in 1995 wanted to work more hours for more pay, compared to half of all part-time workers. In other words, every second part-time worker in Canada is underemployed insofar as they would like to work more hours than they do. This represents a tremendous problem of underemployment in Canada that is not reflected in the official measures of unemployment.

Among part-time workers, a higher proportion of men than women indicated that they would prefer to work more hours for more pay (59 and 46 per cent, respectively), although underemployment of this type is common among both sexes. Likewise, large shares of part-time workers in all age groups wanted to work more hours, and it was only among those aged 45 and older that underemployment declined, albeit modestly (39 per cent; data not shown in table).

Table 25
Work Preferences of Full-time and Part-time Workers, by Gender, Canada, 1995

	% of workers who would prefer to work ...			
	Fewer hours for less pay	Same hours for same pay	More hours for more pay	Total
All	6	66	28	100%
Full-time	7	70	22	100%
Part-time	1	49	50	100%
Men				
Full-time	6	70	25	100%
Part-time	n/a	40	59	100%
Women				
Full-time	9	71	19	100%
Part-time	1	52	46	100%

n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimate

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

The employment preferences of workers, particularly those of women with young children, are often used to explain why part-time employment has become so prevalent in the last two decades. Part-time jobs, the argument goes, provide mothers with the opportunity to balance the demands of paid employment with child care responsibilities. As shown in Table 26, however, many women with children would prefer to work more hours in their part-time jobs. This was the case for about 40 per cent of the women working part-time in 1995 who had preschool-aged children. Clearly, underemployment is common among female part-time workers. The assumption that most part-time jobs are chosen deliberately as a strategy to balance paid and domestic labour must be questioned.

Table 26
Work Preferences of Women, by Full-time and Part-time Status, and by the Presence and Ages of Children, Canada, 1995

	% of workers who would prefer to work ...			
	Fewer hours for less pay	Same hours for same pay	More hours for more pay	Total
Women employed part-time:				
Youngest child aged...				
0 to 2 years	n/a	61	37	100%
3 to 5 years	n/a	59	40	100%
6 to 15 years	n/a	50	49	100%
16 to 24 years	n/a	53	47	100%
No children present	n/a	50	49	100%
Women employed full-time:				
Youngest child aged...				
0 to 2 years	17	68	15	100%
3 to 5 years	13	69	19	100%
6 to 15 years	10	72	18	100%
16 to 24 years	8	72	20	100%
No children present	8	72	20	100%

n/a = sample size too small to provide reliable estimate
Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics's Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Among full-time workers, demands for additional hours diminish as their earnings rise, but the situation is far different for part-time workers, where preferences for additional hours are far less responsive to pay rates. In 1995, almost one-half of the part-time workers wanted more hours, regardless of their hourly wages (Table 27). It was only among part-time workers earning $20 an hour or more that demands for additional work hours declined, and even in this group, their preferences suggested that many were still underemployed. The same pattern was evident when other job characteristics were considered. For example, the demand for more hours was prevalent among part-time workers in all occupational categories in 1995. Even in occupations such as teaching and health care, half of the part-time workers said they would prefer to work additional hours. And dissatisfaction with work schedules was not restricted just to those who worked for a few hours each week: 55 per cent of those who usually worked less than 10 hours a week said

that they wanted additional work hours; among those who worked 20 to 29 hours per week, the proportion was similar (49 per cent).

Table 27
Work Preferences of Full-time and Part-time Workers, by Selected Job Characteristics, Canada, 1995

	% of workers who would prefer more hours for more pay		
	Full-time	Part-time	Difference
Hourly wage			
Less than $7.50	44	57	+ 13
$7.50 to $9.99	37	56	+ 19
$10.00 to $14.99	29	47	+ 18
$15.00 to $19.99	19	51	+ 32
$20.00 or more	13	27	+ 14
Occupation			
Professional - All	16	49	+ 33
Health	18	44	+ 26
Education	13	51	+ 38
Other	17	54	+ 37
Clerical	21	44	+ 23
Sales	29	52	+ 23
Services	32	56	+ 24
Blue collar	27	57	+ 30
Usual hours worked/week*			
Less than 10	–	55	–
10 to 19	–	47	–
20 to 29	–	49	–
30 to 39	24	–	–
40 to 49	23	–	–
50 to 59	16	–	–
60 or more	17	–	–

* Refers to usual hours in all jobs held by respondent

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

Overall, part-time employment represents a significant problem of underemployment in Canada, as many people work far less than they would prefer. This is a problem for more than just the part-time workers on the margins of the labour force who work for only a few hours each week in casual jobs. Underemployment is a problem for part-time workers across age groups, wage rates, and occupations. This clearly indicates that personal preferences for part-time work have not been the major factor underlying its growth over the decade. In addition, there is still a wide discrepancy between the number of work hours sought by Canadians and the number of hours available in the labour market.

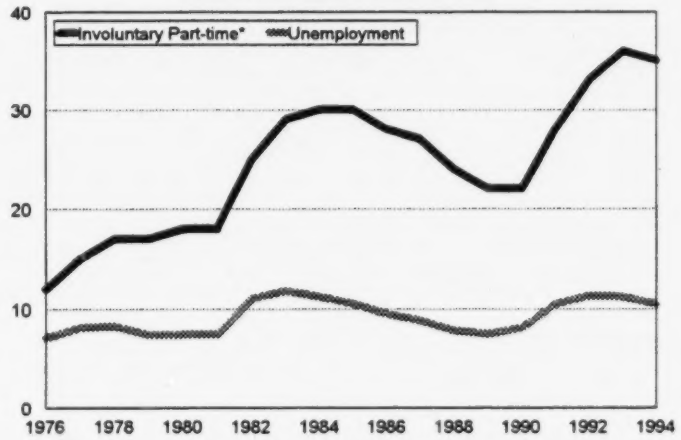
Involuntary part-time employment

The discrepancy between employment preferences and employment availability is evident in the dramatic growth of "involuntary part-time employment." Between 1975 and 1994, the proportion of part-time workers who wanted a full-time job but could not find one – involuntary part-time workers – rose from 11 to 35 per cent, representing an increase of about 675,000 workers. By 1994, there were almost 800,000 Canadians involuntarily working in part-time jobs.

To some extent, this increase reflects the business cycle. During economic recessions fewer full-time jobs are available and workers are forced to take part-time jobs as "better-than-nothing" alternatives. During economic upswings, more full-times jobs are created and the rate of involuntary part-time employment declines.[40] However, there has been an increase in involuntary part-time employment that is independent of the business cycle. Despite the economic recovery between 1985 and 1989, involuntary part-time employment did not drop to the level it had been prior to the 1981-82 recession (Figure 3). And during the economic recession of 1991-92, the rate soared higher than it had been during the previous downturn.[41]

Figure 3

Involuntary Part-time Employment and Unemployment Rates, Canada, 1976 to 1994



* Involuntary part-time as a % of total part-time employment

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Annual Averages, various years.

The characteristics of part-time jobs are important in determining whether they are taken voluntarily or not. People are more apt to take a part-time job if it is a "good" job, that is, when it offers high wages, provides benefits, and is a stable and permanent job. As shown in Table 28, over half of the adult part-time workers in 1995 who earned less than $7.50 per hour were involuntarily part-timers, compared to 22 per cent of those who earned $20.00 per hour or more. This suggests that people are more willing to work part-time if the financial penalties for doing so are minimal. In terms of scheduling, part-time jobs that offer regular daytime shifts are more likely to be taken voluntarily than those with an irregular or on-call schedule, or some other type of shift work. Not surprisingly, a reliable daytime schedule makes a part-time job more attractive. Likewise, part-time jobs that are unionized or those that include an occupational pension plan are more likely to be taken voluntarily than those that do not offer such benefits. However, the figures

in Table 28 indicate that many people were involuntary part-time workers *in spite of the fact* that their jobs paid relatively high hourly wages, included occupational pension plans, or were unionized. For these workers, preferences for full-time employment were not mitigated by the fact that they had access to what appeared to be "good" part-time jobs.

Table 28
Incidence of Involuntary Part-time Employment among Workers Aged 25 and Older, by Selected Job Characteristics, Canada, 1995

	Involuntary part-time as % of part-time employment
Hourly wage	
Less than $7.50	51
$7.50 to $9.99	48
$10.00 to $14.99	35
$15.00 to $19.99	43
$20.00 or more	22
Pension coverage	
Included in occupational pension	34
Not included in occupational pension	41
Unionization	
Union	43
Non-union	37
Work schedule	
Regular day shift	35
On-call or irregular schedule	46
Other shifts	39

Note: Persons aged 15 to 24 were excluded from this table because most were voluntary part-time workers and employed in part-time jobs that were non-unionized, had low hourly wages and no pension coverage. By excluding them from the analysis, the job characteristics associated with involuntary part-time employment can be more accurately assessed.

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

The growing dissatisfaction with part-time work is particularly apparent when trends over the last decade are examined. The top half of Table 29 shows the incidence of involuntary part-time employment by occupational categories for workers aged 25 and older. Even in professional occupations, which many consider to be "good jobs," the incidence of involuntary part-time employment increased by nine percentage points between 1984 and 1994, rising from 26 to 35 per cent. The increases were just as large in other occupational categories.

The growth of involuntary part-time employment within the "good" job sectors of the economy is also evident when annual earnings are considered. The bottom half of Table 29 includes part-time workers (aged 25 and older) who were employed for 49 weeks or more during the year. In 1984, slightly more than one-fifth (22 per cent) of those earning $25,000 to $30,000 per year were involuntary part-time workers; by 1994, this had risen to one-third. An increase was also evident among workers with annual earnings of $30,000 or more.

The financial insecurity of families is an important factor underlying this trend. It is becoming increasingly important for families to have at least two income earners in the labour market if they

wish to maintain their standard of living. A recent report by Statistics Canada showed that over 500,000 more Canadian families would fall below the poverty line if it were not for the earnings of wives.[42] Families can no longer be assured that their financial security will be maintained on the husband's income alone, and there is growing pressure on women to enter the labour force and find paid, full-time employment.

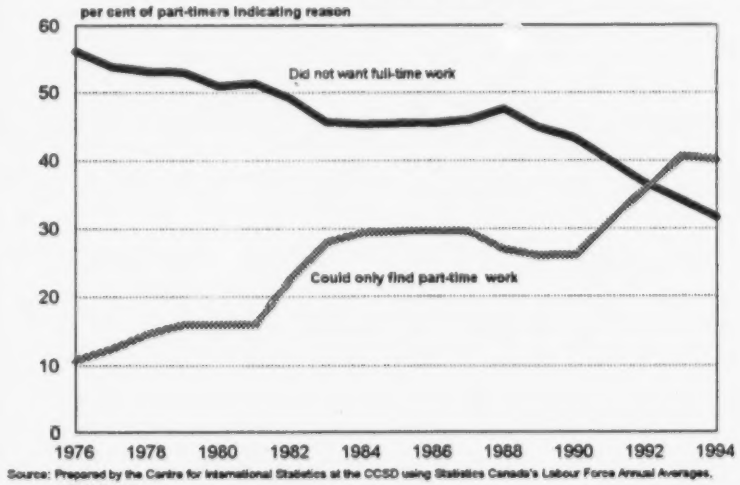
Table 29
Involuntary Part-time Employment among Workers Aged 25 and Older, by Occupation and Annual Earnings, Canada, 1984 and 1994

	Involuntary part-time as a % of part-time employment		
	1984	1994	% point difference
Professional	26	35	+ 9
Clerical	25	35	+ 10
Sales	27	37	+ 10
Services	35	45	+ 10
Blue collar	34	40	+ 6
Full-year workers (1994$)			
Less than $10,000	29	40	+ 11
$10,000 to $14,999	32	41	+ 9
$15,000 to $19,999	29	39	+ 10
$20,000 to $24,999	30	36	+ 6
$25,000 to $29,999	22	34	+ 12
$30,000 or more	23	28	+ 5

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's Survey of Consumer Finances, selected years.

Figure 4

Women Aged 25 to 44: Selected Reasons for Part-time Employment, Canada, 1976 to 1994



Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using Statistics Canada's Labour Force Annual Averages, selected years.

Women's changing employment preferences are evident when we examine their reasons for taking part-time jobs. As shown in Figure 4, there has been a marked decline in the proportion of women who took part-time employment because they did not want to work full-time hours. By contrast, the share increased dramatically for those who took part-time jobs because

they had no other options. Clearly, the argument that part-time jobs are actively chosen should not be overstated.

When the presence and ages of children are considered, the same trend is apparent. Among mothers with preschool-aged children, more than one-quarter were involuntary part-time workers in 1994, up from 19 per cent 10 years earlier (Table 30). The increase was even larger among women with school-aged children. Clearly, part-time employment for women with children is increasingly being shaped by a lack of employment options, rather than by voluntary choices about how best to balance a woman's paid and unpaid work.

Table 30
Involuntary Employment among Women, by the Presence and Ages of Children, Canada, 1984 and 1994

Age of youngest child	Involuntary part-time as a % of part-time employment		
	1984	1994	Diff.
0 to 5 years	18.6	26.5	+ 7.9
6 to 17 years	28.4	41.7	+ 13.3
18 to 24 years	24.3	38.3	+ 14.0
No children present	25.1	26.3	+ 1.2

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's Survey of Consumer Finances, selected years.

Overall, involuntary part-time employment represents a significant problem of underemployment in Canada. This is evident among all part-time workers, including those in professional occupations and those with relatively high annual earnings. Despite the trend towards an up-skilling of the labour force, a growing number of Canadians working in part-time jobs are dissatisfied with their work arrangements and they would prefer to have full-time employment. The data in this section indicate that worker preferences have not been a major reason behind the growth of part-time employment. Rather, it appears that employers have made decisions to hire part-time workers in response to concerns about changing levels of business activity or a desire to cut labour costs.

Conclusion

The introduction of new technologies and changing demands for goods and services have had a major impact on the Canadian labour force. The most positive changes associated with these postindustrial trends have been the "up-skilling" of the labour force and noticeable shifts in the types of jobs available. This is most evident in the growth of jobs in professional and managerial occupations, and in the growing demand for workers with higher levels of educational credentials. But these trends have not led to a significant increase in the pool of good part-time jobs. The vast majority of workers in part-time jobs remain in low-wage sectors of the economy. And although the number of part-time workers in professional occupations is growing, they face several issues of concern, including restricted access to workplace benefits and eroding job security. No matter what the occupation, the vast majority of part-time workers do not have access to pension, medical or dental plans, or to paid sick leave. It is particularly surprising that so many part-time workers in the health and educational sectors do not have these non-wage benefits, given the high rate of unionization in these sectors.

Poor wages and benefits have long been a concern for many part-time workers in Canada. Trends that weaken the position of part-time workers include the growing use of short-term employment contracts and on-call work schedules. While such trends may serve an employer's desire to reduce labour costs and increase the firm's ability to respond to fluctuating demands for products and services, they undermine the already weak economic position of part-time workers.

The findings in this study also highlight the serious nature of underemployment in Canada. Fully half of all part-time workers would prefer to work more hours for more pay. This includes a significant proportion of women with young children, despite the common assumption that these women choose to work fewer paid hours so that they can balance their family responsibilities.

In summary, data up to 1995 indicate that advances in the quality of work as a result of the technological revolution have largely excluded part-time workers. This is particularly worrisome because the number of part-time workers has been growing in comparison to full-time workers. It appears that the polarization of the labour force – one group of workers with good wages, benefits and job security, and another group, including most part-time workers, with poor wages, no benefits and little security – is worsening.

Endnotes

1. Susan Crompton, "The Renaissance of Self-Employment," in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 1993, p. 22.

2. Mary Lou Coates, *Part-Time Employment: Labour Market Flexibility and Equity Issues*. Research and Current Issues Series No. 50. Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1988, p. 7.

3. While data are not available for Canada, Chris Tilly claims that up until 1970 in the United States, "the growth trend [in non-standard employment] was driven by expanding voluntary part-time employment, as women and young people desiring part-time hours streamed into the workforce." Chris Tilly, "Reasons for the Continuing Growth of Part-Time Employment," in *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1991, p. 10.

4. In the first decades of the century, most women were engaged in domestic labour and home production; only 13 per cent held jobs in the paid labour market in 1901. Erin Phillips and Paul Phillips, *Women and Work: Equality in the Labour Market*. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983, p. 35. Cited in Ann Duffy and Norene Pupo, "Part-time Employment among Canadian Women: A Nexus between Capitalism and Patriarchy," in *Working Part-Time: Risks and Opportunities*. Barbara Warme, Katherina Lundy and Larry Lundy, eds. New York: Praeger, 1992, p. 175.

5. Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *A Working Majority: What Women Must Do for Pay*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1983, p. 249, and Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Annual Averages 1989-1994*. Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology, 1995, p. B-7.

6. Wallace Clement and John Myles, *Relations of Ruling*. (note 2). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994, pp. 34-35.

7. Labour Canada, *Part-time Work in Canada: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1983. Cat. L 31-45/1983/E, p. 21.

8. Ibid.

9. Economic Council of Canada. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Employment in the Service Economy*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1990. Cat. EC22-164/1990E, p. 13.

10. In a different report now being prepared by the CCSD, we examine another important trend that may affect the quality of part-time jobs – the downsizing of the public sector. While cut-backs in government services and reductions in staff have an impact on both full-time and part-time workers, these developments are particularly significant for part-time employment. It is in the public sector that part-time workers have had the greatest access to jobs offering wages comparable to those of full-time workers, largely because of the high rate of unionization in the public sector. But as government at all levels lay off workers, off-load the provision of services to the private sector, and undertake other cost-cutting strategies, gains made by part-time workers within this sector are likely to diminish, thus reducing the possibilities of part-time jobs moving to the "good" side of the good jobs/bad jobs

dichotomy. *Public Sector Downsizing: The Impact on Job Quality in Canada* was released by the CCSD in October 1997.

11. Angus Reid Interactive, *Working Canadians and their Jobs*, April 30, 1996.

12. Angus Reid Interactive, *The Federal Political Scene, The Public Agenda*, September 6, 1996.

13. Angus Reid Interactive, *Economic Outlook, Consumer Confidence, and the Generations' Perspective*, November 30, 1995.

14. Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Annual Averages: 1995*. Ottawa: Industry, Science and Technology, 1996, p. A-3.

15. The subjective component was dropped because most of the persons who identified themselves as full-time workers, despite working less than 30 hours a week, were employed in industries where there were no restrictions on the number of hours worked. This more stringent application of the 30-hour benchmark provides a more accurate profile of work hours. Hours of work are now calculated on the basis of the individual's main or sole job, because a growing number of workers today hold more than one job, and many string together two or more part-time jobs in order to gain full-time hours. Under the old definition, these workers would have been counted as full-time, but under the new definition they are considered to be part-time.

16. OECD, "Medium-term perspectives on labour supply and occupational change," in *Employment Outlook July 1994*. Paris: OECD, 1994, p. 82.

17. Ibid., p. 92.

18. Assessing whether jobs have, on average, higher or lower skill requirements than in the past is difficult, primarily because there are no agreed upon definitions of skill, nor any standard means of measuring skills. Instead, occupational categories are often used as a proxy measure, although the merits of using this approach have been contested.

19. Peter Lusztig, "Education, Training and Labour Markets," in *Policy Options*, 15, 6 (July-August, 1994): 46.

20. W. Craig Riddell, "Human Capital Formation in Canada: Recent Developments and Policy Responses," in *Labour Market Polarization and Social Policy Reform*, Keith Banting and Charles Beach, eds. Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 1995, p. 144.

21. In 1996, unemployment rates by educational attainment were: elementary education – 14.9 per cent; some high school – 15.7 per cent; high school graduate – 9.7 per cent; some post-secondary – 10.4 per cent; post-secondary certificate or diploma – 8.1 per cent; and university degree – 5.2 per cent.

22. OECD, "Technological change and innovation." Chapter 4 in *The OECD Jobs Study: Evidence and Explanations*. Paris: OECD, 1994, pp. 133-134.

23. Gordon Betcherman, Kathryn McMullen, Norm Leckie and Christina Caron. *The Canadian Workplace in Transition*. Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre Press, Queen's University, 1994, pp. 14-15.

24. Ibid., p. 17.

25. Economic Council of Canada, *Employment in the Service Economy.* Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1991, Cat. EC22-172/1991E, p. 110.

26. OECD, "Technological change and innovation," p. 163.

27. The concentration of part-time jobs in only a few occupational categories and industry sectors has been a long-standing concern in Canada. In 1981, the Wallace Commission reported that "part-time workers are markedly concentrated within a few industries, and they have a limited range of occupations in comparison to the range of occupations of full-time workers." Wallace Commission, p. 58.

28. Separate estimates for managerial and professional occupations are not published in *Labour Force Annual Averages*, so the combined figures are presented here.

29. Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 3rd Edition, p. 45.

30. Figures from Statistics Canada's *Pension Plans in Canada Survey* show a comparable increase: the share of paid employees with pension coverage rose from 42.9 per cent in 1987 to 44.6 per cent in 1993. Statistics Canada, *Canada's Retirement Income Programs: A Statistical Overview*. Cat. No. 74-507-XPB, Table 2.2, p. 47.

31. Garnett Picot and Richard Dupuy, "Job Creation by Company Size Class: Concentration and Persistence of Job Gains and Losses in Canadian Companies," Research Paper 93. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch, 1996.

32. Because information on job security, regularity of pay, and skill requirements is not available at different points in time, our analysis is limited to a single year, with comparisons drawn between full-time and part-time workers.

33. Grant Schellenberg and Christopher Clark, *Temporary Employment in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, p. 20.

34. Using education as a proxy for skill level required is far from perfect since it reflects the amount of education received by individuals rather than the amount of education that is necessarily required for the job in which they are employed.

35. In the 1991 Census, an occupational classification was developed "on the basis of the education, training or skill level required to enter the jobs, as well as the kind of work performed, as determined by the tasks, duties and responsibilities of the occupation." Statistics Canada, *1991 Census Public Use Microdata File: Individuals, Data Documentation*. Service No. 48-039E, p. 130.

36. Veronica Beechey, "Rethinking the Definition of Work: Gender and Work," in *Feminization of the Labour Force: Paradox and Promises*. Jane Jenson, Elisabeth Hagen and Ceallaigh Reddy, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 1988, p. 48.

37. Jane Jenson, "Part-time Employment and Women: A Range of Strategies," in *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada*. Isabella Bakker, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, p. 97.

38. OECD, *The OECD Jobs Study: Evidence and Explanations*. Paris: OECD, 1994, p. 163.

39. Graham S. Lowe, "Computers in the workplace," in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*. Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 75-001-XPE, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 34.

40. Nathalie Noreau, "Involuntary part-timers," in *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Autumn 1994): 25-30. Also see Ernest Akyeampong, "Involuntary part-time employment in Canada, 1975-1985," in *The Labour Force*, Cat. 71-001, (December 1986): 143-170. Ottawa: Supply and Services.

41. Ibid. See Noreau, for a cogent discussion of these trends.

42. Statistics Canada, *Characteristics of Dual-Earner Families in 1995*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 13-215-XPB.

Appendix 1

Table A-1
Average Hourly Wage Rates, by Detailed Occupational Categories and by Full-time and Part-time Status, Canada, 1995

	Full-time	Part-time	Absolute difference
Management & Administration	19.68	14.70	-4.98
Professional	19.54	16.80	-2.74
Social sciences	19.30	13.72	-5.58
Elementary & secondary education	20.63	19.26	-1.37 *
Other education	22.22	17.89	-4.33
Nursing, therapy & related	17.99	17.75	-0.24 *
Other health & medicine	18.08	18.72	+0.64 *
Artistic & recreation	15.89	11.17	-4.72
Clerical	13.29	10.83	-2.46
Stenographers & typists	13.66	14.44	+0.78*
Bookkeeping & account recording	11.73	10.03	-1.70
Reception, mail & message distrib.	12.51	9.83	-2.68
Library, filing & correspondence	14.37	12.23	-2.14
Sales	11.98	7.71	-4.27
Services	11.41	7.79	-3.62
Food, beverage & lodging	8.94	6.94	-2.00
Personal, apparel & furnishings	8.91	8.95	+0.04 *
Other services	11.70	8.56	-3.14
Blue Collar	15.36	9.31	-6.05
Motor vehicle operators	13.92	11.13	-2.79
Material handling	13.12	7.61	-5.51

Note: Some occupational subcategories were excluded from this table because the sample size was too small to provide reliable estimates of average hourly wages.

* All differences are statistically significant to .01 level of confidence or better, except for those noted with an asterix.

Source: Prepared by the Centre for International Statistics at the CCSD using microdata from Statistics Canada's 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements.

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